SUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware about the menace of spurious and adulterated consumer goods in the market;

(b) if so, what concrete steps Government have taken or propose to take to tackle the problem; and

(c) whether Government propose to standardise the quality and price of the consumer items to save the innocent public from the present situation, if so, what are the steps taken are proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) to (c) The Bureau of Indian Standards has taken a number of steps with the objective that consumers got quality products. About 2000 Indian Standards for consumer products have been formulated, specifying the functional and safety requirements. Formulation and upgradation of Standards is an on-going activity of BIS.

BIS is also operating a Certification Marks Scheme under which manufacturers are licensed to use the Standard Mark on goods produced by them in conformity with relevant Indian Standards.

The Bureau takes a number of steps to ensure that the goods bearing the Standard Mark have been produced in accordance with the relevant standards. This Scheme is generally voluntary in nature. However, Compulsory Certification has been provided by the Government under various Acts, Orders, Rules etc. for such products (at present 129) which are important from the point of view of health and safety of consumers.

BIS also has a mechanism under which the consumer can seek redressal of their grievances against quality of ISI Marked products.

BIS also takes appropriate action against those units which are not licensed but found misusing the Standard Mark.

Import of palm oil

16. SHRI VITHALBHAI M. PATEL: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have imported palm oil for public distribution system;

(b) the details of the quantity of the oil imported; and

(c) what is the cost price of imported palm oil and at what price it is to be distributed through Public Distribution System?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) No, Sir, The Government has not imported any quantity of Palm Oil for Public Distribution System during the current financial year.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Does not arise.

Strengthening of BIS

17. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently taken a decision to strengthen the BIS to upgrade the quality of Indian products to international level to boost exports;

(b) whether the BIS laboratories would be modernised with the help of World Bank;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) what other steps Government propose to take to enforce BIS compulsorily for all consumer products?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) BIS is constantly endeavouring to provide contemporary standards to enable the industry produce goods of international quality. Indian Standards are being aligned to international standards. BIS is also operating a quality certification scheme, both for products and quality systems.

(b) BIS has secured a loan from the World Bank to partly finance modernisation of testing facilities as per international levels.

(c) Under the project, exports from internationally reputed laboratory assessed the present capability of BIS laboratory and submitted a report which is being implemented. Laboratory upgradation and modernisation is being taken up in the areas of domestic electrical appliances, food processing and automotives and more sophisticated equipments are being procured. Laboratory managers have also been deputed for training in leading laboratories abroad.

(d) BIS Certification Scheme is voluntary in nature. Compulsory Certification has been provided by the Government under various Acts, Orders, Rules etc, only in such products (presently 129) which are important from the point of view of health and safety of consumers.

Poor offtake of foodgrains under PDS

18. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL:
SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA:
SHRI N. GIRI PRASAD:
SHRI N. E. BALARAM:

Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the present poor offtake of foodgrains under the PDS in many parts of the country; if so, what are the reasons therefor;

(b) whether Government are also aware that PDS has failed to subsidise the bare necessities of the rural/tribal poor people where the number of PDS shops are not much as compared to urban areas;

(c) if so, whether Government propose to review the whole system and evolve a new public distribution system so that PDS could play an important role in the current atmosphere of economic liberalisation; and

(d) whether the committee of State Ministers, set up by Government to give a new direction to the PDS, has submitted its report, if so, what are the details of its recommendation and whether any action has been taken by Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) Yes, Sir. The low offtake could be attributed to adequate availability of foodgrains in most parts of the country.

(b) Nearly 75 percent of the 4 lakh Fair Price Shops in the country are located in the rural areas. While shortcoming may exist in a system of this maginude, the Public Distribution System (PDS) does provide considerable succour to the people in rural and tribal areas also.

(c) and (d) At the 15th Meeting of the PDS Advisory Council held in March, 1993 it was resolved that a National Policy on PDS be evolved focussing on the need to provide for larger and more meaningful quantities to the really needy and deserving sections of the population. Pursuant to this resolution, a Committee of Ministers was set up. The recom-